

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, XF

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL TIMES ARTICLE ON USG-PLO CONTACTS

REF: LONDON 763 (NOTAL)

1. TIMES HAS SO FAR BEEN ONLY LONDON NEWSPAPER TO FOLLOW UP ON FINANCIAL TIMES STORY REPORTING USG-PLO CONTACTS (REFTEL). TIMES OF JANUARY 19 ON PAGE 5 CARRIES REPORT FROM PATRICK BROGAN THAT "THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS DENIED CATEGORICALLY THAT IT IS SENDING SECRET MESSAGES TO THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION." QUOTING FINANCIAL TIMES REPORT, TIMES STORY CONTINUES, "THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS THE REPORT IS UNTRUE, BUT ADMITS THAT FROM TIME TO TIME INDIVIDUALS COME TO THE DEPARTMENT SAYING THEY CARRY MESSAGEQ FROM THE PLO, AND THAT THEY ARE LISTENED TO. PROFESSOR NORTON MEZVINSKY, OF CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, CONFIRMED TODAY THAT HE HAD HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACTS BOTH WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND WITH SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE PLO. HE WOULD NOT COMMENT ON THE STATEMENT IN THE FINANCIAL TIMES THAT HE HAD CARRIED MESSAGES...HE SAID THERE WERE A NUMBER OF INACCURACIES IN THE REPORT, BUT HE DID NOT DENY ITS SUBSTANCE. HE SAID HE WAS IN 'IR-UNCLASSIFIED

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REGULAR CONTAAT" WITH 'PEOPLE OF SOME IMPORTANCE' ON BOTH

SIDES AND WOULD GO NO FURTHER."

2. TIMES STORY GOES ON TO GIVE BRIEF BIOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND ON MEZTINSKY AND NOTES, "HE SAID THAT HIS CLOSEST POLITICAL ASSOCIATES IN ISRAEL WERE THE ISRAEL GROUP FOR CIVIC AND HUMAN RIGHTS, WHOSE LEADER IS PROFESSOR ISRAEL SHAHKA, OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY, JERUSALEM."

3. TIMES ARTICLE CONCLUDES, "STATE DEPARTMENT OBSERVES THERE ARE MORE WAYS OF HEARING FROM THE PLO THAN THROUGH PERIPATETIC PROFESSORS." SPIERS

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